

SAM – FORMS MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 1700 INDEX

This chapter describes the state's Forms Management Program and statutory requirements.

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PROGRAM SUMMARY, RESOURCES, AND CONTACTS

1700

(Revised 7/2014)

Government Code Section [14771](#) establishes the State Forms Management Program (SFMP) for all state agencies to facilitate the statewide standardization of all agencies' forms and forms management programs.

The SFMP is administered by the Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)) which is located within the Department of General Services, Office of Strategic Planning, Policy and Research, 707 Third Street, West Sacramento, California 95605. For inquiries, telephone the FMC at (916) 375-4895, (916) 376-9931, or fax (916) 376-6340.

This chapter provides major policy for the SFMP, which includes, but is not limited to, criteria for forms design, inventory control systems, terms and definitions, review processes, agencies' responsibilities and reporting requirements. Procedures for complying with this policy are contained in handbooks available from the FMC.

The Forms Management and Forms Design handbooks are part of the FMC's resource documents and are based on 'best business practices' for forms programs. They contain guidelines, procedures, instructions, recommended readings, and other detailed information relating to state and departmental forms management programs.

The departmental forms coordinator (DFC) and/or other staff involved in the forms management responsibilities should contact the FMC for detailed information. See SAM Section 0030 for contact names and telephone numbers.

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STATUTORY AUTHORITY

1701

(Reviewed 7/2014)

[Government Code Section 14770](#) requires the director of the Department of General Services (DGS) to “. . . establish and staff an activity within the department to be known as the “forms management center” for the orderly design, implementation and maintenance of a statewide forms management program.” This activity includes the study, development, coordination, and initiation of state standard (STD.) forms (forms of interagency and common administrative usage) which is required by [Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(2\)](#).

[Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(9\)](#) requires the director of the Department of General Services (DGS), through the Forms Management Center (FMC) to “...develop and promulgate rules and standards to implement the [State Forms Management Program].” These rules and standards include responsibilities of the FMC, State agencies, and departmental forms coordinators (DFCs).

[Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(14\)](#) requires the director of the Department of General Services (DGS), through the FMC, to “. . . provide notice to state agencies, forms management representatives, and departmental forms coordinators, that in the usual course of reviewing and revising all public-use forms that refer to or use the terms spouse, husband, wife, father, mother, marriage, or marital status, that appropriate references to state-registered domestic partner, parent, or state- registered domestic partnership are to be included.”

The term “agency” refers to appropriate state departments, offices, boards, commissions, etc.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORMS MANAGEMENT CENTER

1702

(Revised 7/2014)

The Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)) is responsible for carrying out the provisions of [Government Code Section 14771](#) on behalf of the director of the Department of General Services. These responsibilities include:

- a. Establishing standards, policies and procedures to carry out the state’s forms management program.
- b. Assisting agencies in developing programs for the effective management, analysis and design of forms.
- c. Establishing basic design and specification criteria for the state forms.
- d. Maintaining a central cross-index of state agency forms, eliminating redundant forms while providing a central source of information for users.
- e. Establishing a program for the management of the state standard (STD.) forms.
- f. Studying, developing, designing, revising, coordinating, and managing the state’s STD. forms in cooperation with the agencies responsible for their content.
- g. Obtaining information and reports from agencies as required administering the program and evaluating its progress.

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ESTABLISHING THE AGENCY PROGRAM

1705

(Revised 7/2014)

[Government Code Section 14750\(a\)](#) requires the head of each agency to “...establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the records and information collection practices of the agency. The program shall ensure that the information needed by the agency shall be obtained with a minimum burden upon individuals and businesses...”

[Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(4\)](#) requires the director of the Department of General Services (DGS), through the Forms Management Center (FMC), to “...provide assistance, training, and instruction in forms management techniques to state agencies, forms management representatives, and departmental forms coordinators . . .”

The forms management program is mandatory. Its effectiveness depends on a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the operating agencies, DGS and the FMC. The responsibilities, derived from the statutes cited here are formulated from good business practices and gathered from forms professionals and forms associations.

Forms management is a staff activity. The program should be housed at a level high enough to give the perspective and authority needed for across-the-board improvements and to provide technical guidance and department-wide coordination between functions. The program should be centralized and needs backing, upper-level support, and stature in the organization to be successful.

[Government Code Sections 14771\(a\)](#) and [14775](#) require the director of each state agency to fulfill legislative requirements needed to effectively implement the State Forms Management Program. Such requirements may involve submitting various reports to the DGS FMC.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENTAL FORMS MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE (FMR) AND FORMS COORDINATOR (DFC)

1706

(Revised 7/2014)

[Government Code Section 14772](#) requires the director of each State agency to “. . . appoint a forms management representative (FMR) and provide necessary assistance to implement the State Forms Management Program (SFMP) within the agency.” FMR usually has a level of responsibility equivalent to a staff services manager position.

The FMR appoints and works with the departmental forms coordinator (DFC) to manage and maintain the forms management program within the agency. The DFC usually has a level of responsibility equivalent to that of a staff services analyst position.

These appointments are made using the form FMC 105 – *State Forms Management Program Appointments*, signed by the department director, and submitted to the Forms Management Center (FMC).

The primary responsibility of the DFC is to serve as liaison between the agency and the FMC. The DFC of an agency responsible for the content of a state standard (STD.) form works closely with the FMC to coordinate the development, design and publication of the form; including ensuring the proof review and approval cycle is prompt between authors and the FMC. Responsibilities for DFCs also include maintaining a list of forms distinguished by business- and public-use categories and keeping contact information about their authors current.

Agencies may also staff their forms management program with forms program managers, forms analysts, forms designers, forms authors, forms programmers, and proofreaders to assist their FMR and DFC in carrying out the forms management responsibilities of the agency.

Classifications commonly used to staff the forms management program have been staff services managers, associate governmental program analysts, staff services analysts, digital composers, information officers, and information systems analysts. Staff should possess the skills, knowledge, and abilities to carry out the duties detailed in SAM Chapter 1700 and the FMC's handbooks.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENTAL FORMS MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE (FMR) AND FORMS COORDINATOR (DFC)

1706 (Cont. 1)

(Revised 7/2014)

On behalf of the agency, the DFC is responsible for:

- a. Coordinating the agency forms management program.
- b. Delegating duties to other appropriate personnel.
- c. Acting as the contact between the agency and the FMC.
- d. If the agency is responsible for the content of any STD. form, providing timely response to requests for information from the FMC.
- e. Inventorying and establishing an ongoing system of controls for the forms ordered and maintained by the agency.
- f. Providing safeguards in all forms management activities for the protection of individual privacy and confidentiality of information.
- g. Reviewing and approving requests for printing or creation of electronic versions of forms for the agency or delegating those responsibilities in the way that is most effective for the agency.
- h. Determining that only necessary forms are ordered or established in electronic media and that those forms meet the standards set forth in the Forms Design Handbook.
- i. Ensuring that the new or revised forms meet the standards set forth in the Forms Design Handbook and the Forms Management Handbook.
- j. Ensuring discontinuance of obsolete forms from the agency system.
- k. Conducting research into forms management problems.
- l. Conducting forms analysis for designing or redesigning the agency's forms.
- m. Being responsible for reports required by the FMC for administration of the program. These include, but are not limited to, reports on the agency Public Use Forms Program and the Business Use Forms/Reports Program.
- n. Distributing information on forms management activities.
- o. Coordinating with the agency training office to provide and make arrangements for appropriate training of forms management personnel.

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1710

(Revised 7/2014)

Forms – Any preprinted or electronic documents containing fixed messages or requests that are used repeatedly. Variable data or fill-in spaces may or may not be included. This definition applies to all temporary or permanent forms. It applies whether a form is printed by the Office of State Publishing or on agency duplicating equipment. It includes such items as form letters, tags, labels, continuous forms, tab cards and envelopes. Data entry screens and reports from databases are included in this definition.

Business – A business is any partnership, corporation, organization, business trust, or any person or nongovernmental entity or representative thereof, which supplies the state with information by filling out a form.

Business-Use Forms/Reports – State forms and/or reports used to collect and/or solicit information, including signatures, from businesses. See [Government Code Sections 14771\(c\) and 14775](#).

Public-Use Forms – State forms used to obtain or solicit facts, opinions, or other information from the public or private citizens, etc. See [Government Code Section 14741\(1\)](#).

State Standard (STD.) Forms – State forms developed for use by all agencies to carry out common statewide administrative functions. See [Government Code Sections 14771\(a\)\(2-6\)](#).

Agency / Departmental Forms – State forms created and used specifically by an agency to carry out the agency's administrative functions. The term 'agency' refers to appropriate departments, offices, boards, commissions, etc.

Forms Management Representative (FMR) – An individual appointed by the department's director to implement the agency's forms management program. See [Government Code Section 14772](#).

Departmental Forms Coordinator (DFC) – An individual appointed by the department's FMR to serve as liaison between the agency and the Forms Management Center.

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FORMS MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND GUIDELINES

1715

(Revised 7/2014)

As required by [Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(4\)](#), the Forms Management Center (FMC) provides training and assistance in all aspects of establishing and implementing the State Forms Management Program.

Due to advances in technology, many state government agencies use diverse software to produce forms, both paper and electronic such as data entry screens used to process data on a variety of information-processing systems. To ensure uniformity, the FMC offers training classes and holds user group meetings. During classroom training, instructors educate students in forms design techniques and forms management strategies such as effective layout presentation and organization, naming convention guidelines and file management methods. At user group meetings, problems and resolutions as well as industry trends are discussed. The FMC also provides manuals that include topics such as forms design, forms management and forms analysis.

State agencies may contact the FMC to coordinate and schedule training sessions.

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FORMS DESIGN STANDARDS

1720

(Revised 7/2014)

Forms can be filled out and designed on paper or by electronic media. Agencies should follow the forms design standards, criteria, and techniques presented in the Forms Design Handbook. All agency forms and all State Standard (STD.) forms must contain the term “State of California”, the authoring department’s name, a form title, a form number, and a form creation or revision date. Contact the Forms Management Center (FMC) for information about forms design standards and software.

Refer to SAM Section 1710 for agency forms and STD. forms definitions.

Forms not included in the STD. Forms Program may not carry “STD.” or any variation of that designation as a prefix to the form number. If a form is removed from coordination as an STD. form and returned to management of the generating agency, the agency must change the number and identification at the next printing. These forms may carry a statement such as “Formerly STD. XXX”.

All agency forms must show certain identifying information. If there is space, you should place this information together on the form. The Forms Design handbook shows formatting for this information.

Form Titles – Form titles must describe both the form’s subject and function. See the Forms Management handbook for help with titling forms.

Form Numbers – Ideally, form numbers should be prefixed by the initials of the agency, i.e., FTB, WRCB, etc. The numbers may follow any plan or scheme that works for your agency but must not duplicate a number already in use by the agency. An exception is allowed if a number is differently prefixed or suffixed. A form used by an office or division within an agency may carry a sub-prefix. An example is “GS-OAS” for the DGS, Office of Administrative Services. Suffixes are often helpful to show field office versions with different mailing addresses or close relationship to another form, such as FTB 1000-LA, or DOJ 1000B.

Creation or Revision Dates – The date, if the form is new, must be the month and year in which the form was created or first distributed, such as “NEW 1-96”. If it is revised, the date will be the month and year in which the form was revised, such as “Rev. 1-96”. The notation “TEMP” may be used instead of ‘NEW’ or ‘Rev.’ on a form intended to be temporary, such as a form used in a short-term project. “TEST” or “PILOT” may be used on forms being tested before release to all users.

It is not advisable to preprint names of employees on forms unless there are compelling reasons to do so. An exception may be made for names of elected or appointed officials.

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FORMS REVIEW PROCESSES

1725

(Reviewed 7/2014)

Proposed changes to paper and electronic forms should be reviewed for legal impact, workflow processes and routed for review by the appropriate departmental staff. Coordinating this review and approval process is the responsibility of the departmental forms coordinator (DFC).

STATE STANDARD (STD.) FORMS

1730

(Reviewed 7/2014)

State standard (STD.) forms are state forms developed for use by all agencies to carry out common statewide administration functions. The Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)) is responsible for the orderly design, implementation, management and maintenance of STD. forms, including STD. electronic forms (eForms) and integrated STD. eForms systems.

In accordance with [Government Code Section 14771](#), state government agents and entities doing business with the state should use STD. forms disseminated by the FMC rather than reproduce their own.

The FMC ensures the most current versions are available either online or in hard-copy paper format. STD. eForms are available for online use on the FMC's website. Certain paper forms are available through the Office of State Publishing in prepackaged quantities and minimum print quantities.

Using STD. forms managed by the FMC ensures that the most cost-effective, economical and efficient solution is provided to the state.

These compliance practices reduce costs associated with reproduction, dissemination, storage, and destruction, eliminating redundancy by serving as a centralized location for management of STD. forms. Observing these compliance practices avoids the probability of using an expired form revision or a bootlegged form. Bootlegged forms and expired form revisions have been found to increase administrative costs and cause legality problems.

If a state agency has a suggested revision to an STD. form, but is not the author of the form, it may submit the revision proposal to the FMC. The FMC will review the proposal and coordinate review by the form's authoring agency for approval.

Note: Customizing department forms for anyone other than the authoring agency will not be performed by the FMC.

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STATE STANDARD (STD.) FORMS IDENTIFICATION

1731

(Revised 7/2014)

To ensure accuracy in tracking the author of a state standard (STD.) form, the originating department's name must be placed near the location of the title, number and date of the form after or opposite the "State of California" line.

The Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)), in order to enforce forms identification standards state-wide, reserves the right to modify the information contained in the "State of California" line, department's name, title, number, and date of any STD. form. Modification of this information may not be made without the consent of the FMC. The positioning of this information on a form is left to the discretion of the FMC and may be modified by the FMC to fit space limitations.

Forms not included in the STD. Forms Program may not carry "STD." or any variation of that designation as a prefix to the form number. If a form is removed from coordination as an STD. form and returned to management of the authoring agency, the agency must change the number and identification at the next printing. These forms may carry a statement such as "Formerly STD. XXX".

STATE STANDARD (STD.) FORMS SECURITY

1732

(Revised 7/2014)

To ensure compliance, security technology will be applied and enforced on all state standard (STD.) electronic forms (eForms) and integrated STD. eForms systems the Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)) disseminates.

These security practices include locking of STD. eForms to reduce unauthorized possession and unapproved altering of the content, design and form field properties, and disabling of menu options for STD. eForms deployed on the FMC's website. The FMC's purpose for deploying STD. eForms on its website is to ensure that a cost-effective, economical and efficient solution is provided to the state, and to enable entities, public and private, to conduct administrative transactions for state business.

STD. eForms should not be downloaded. This non-downloadable aspect ensures that the current revision of an STD. form is used.

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MODIFIED STATE STANDARD (STD.) FORMS

1733

(Revised 7/2014)

Modified state standard (STD.) forms – If your agency has a significant and compelling need for a modification of an STD. form for your agency only, you must request approval in writing from the Forms Management Center ([FMC](#)). This request must first be reviewed and approved by your agency department forms coordinator (DFC). Explain the need for the change and the benefits expected and attach a mock-up or draft of the modified form. If the FMC finds the request is reasonable, they will then ask the responsible agency if the modification can be accepted. If the request is granted, a copy of the FMC's approval must be attached to any request for printing. No approval will be valid for more than one year unless specifically stated in the approval by the FMC. This is to ensure that you are not reprinting forms that have been revised.

STD. forms modified by an agency with approval of the FMC will carry the STD. number and the naming convention of the generating agency, such as "STD. 15 (Rev. 6-95) DGS 210 (Rev. 1/2002)."

Overprinted STD. forms – If your agency purchases STD. forms in their original paper form and wishes to overprint with agency information, you must request pre-approval from the FMC. Send the FMC a written request with a copy of the form as you wish it overprinted. The Office of State Publishing will not overprint STD. forms without approval from the FMC. Overprinted forms do not need special identification of the using agency if it is identified in the material overprinted.

Electronic STD. form – You must also request approval for your agency to use an electronic version of an STD. form that was not distributed by the FMC. The procedure is the same as the request for a modified STD. form. The form must carry the STD. number and the naming convention of the generating agency, such as "STD. 15 (Rev. 6-95) DGS 210 (Rev. 1/2002)."

State government agencies may opt to have STD. forms developed in-house by state government union employees such as digital composers or may coordinate development with FMC. Whichever the case, STD. forms must adhere to the FMC's forms design principles and practices. As a result, the FMC has final approval of the layout and design of STD. forms, including STD. eForms and integrated STD. eForms systems. The final management and dissemination of STD. forms must occur from FMC or from its centralized resource centers. Compliance with these guidelines minimizes the chance of errors associated with bootlegged forms and maximizes state resources.

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BUSINESS-USE INVENTORY

1735

(Reviewed 7/2014)

[Government Code Sections 14771\(c\)](#) and [14775](#) require the development, maintenance, and review of a statewide inventory of non-tax business-use forms and reports used by state agencies to collect and/or solicit information from businesses.

This inventory is known as the Business-Use Inventory (BUI) which is comprised of the forms your department has created in order to conduct its daily business and reports that it requests of businesses. For the purpose of this inventory, a business is defined as any partnership, corporation, organization, business trust, or any person or non-governmental entity or representative thereof which supplies the state with information by filling out a form.

[Government Code Section 14771\(c\)](#) requires the director of the Department of General Services (DGS), through the Forms Management Center (FMC), to develop and maintain the statewide Business-Use Inventory, and notify state agencies of their annual review requirements.

[Government Code Section 14775\(b\)](#) requires each state agency, commencing on December 31, 1995, to review one-third of its Business-Use Inventory on an annual basis.

The reporting period has been changed to alleviate other workloads that exist due to the closing of fiscal years. The new reporting period is January 1 through December 31. Reports for that calendar year are due on December 31.

Initially, the reporting requirement is met by submitting a complete listing of all the business-use forms created by your agency, along with other information such as revision date, form type, and associated statutory code. The FMC will combine all agency lists into a statewide master list. For very specific instructions for formatting your data please contact the FMC.

As part of the annual review requirements, each state agency is to eliminate those forms and/or reports that are not mandated by statute. However, an agency head may certify the continued use of a form and/or report if the information provided on the form and/or report meet specific requirements detailed in [Government Code Section 14775\(b\)](#).

[Government Code Section 14775\(c\)](#) states that a business may contest an agency head's certification of the continued use of a form and/or report.

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PUBLIC-USE FORMS INVENTORY

1740

(Reviewed 7/2014)

[Government Code Section 14771\(a\)\(12\)](#) requires that forms to be used by the public (including businesses) have assigned control numbers. The agency form number serves this purpose and must appear on the form as part of the identification. See SAM Section 1720.

An agency may not ask for or require members of the public to supply information to the state on a form not so identified. This applies whether the information is submitted voluntarily, required to gain or retain a benefit or service, or mandatory (a penalty will be assessed for failure to provide the information).

Agencies have been given the responsibility by the Forms Management Center (FMC) to identify all forms used by the public to maintain a current index and inventory of forms. Upon request, agencies must report changes to their inventory to the FMC.

Government Code Sections [14771 – 14775](#) and SAM Chapters 1700 – 1750 give the FMC ruling authority concerning the disposition of public-use forms. During the FMC's analytical review of public-use forms, the FMC may create a state standard (STD.) form in order to eliminate duplicate forms and duplicate form authoring efforts by state departments.

When weighing the effect that a form's disposition has on interagency and common administrative usage, consideration of management and maintenance criteria shall include, but is not limited to, costs associated with publication, distribution and availability.

The FMC will make every effort to meet the needs of the authoring agency. However, an authoring agency must understand that the needs of the state supersede the needs of an agency. FMC expects full cooperation and objectivity from an authoring agency and expects abidance by and compliance with the FMC's decisions, policies, and procedures.

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OTHER APPLICABLE FORM REQUIREMENTS

1745

(Revised 1/2015)

There are other pertinent laws and/or directives regarding forms to consider. This includes, but is not limited to:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public.

- The Rehabilitation Act: [Full text](#)
- US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: [Overview of Section 508](#)

Savable Documents

The [Form Modernization Initiative](#), introduced by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) focuses on making state forms fillable and savable online. This will help reduce errors, processing delays and enhance the user experience by providing a more efficient method to communicate with government.

Privacy and Disclosure

State and federal laws protect people's privacy and confidential information. An agency must obey these laws when gathering or disclosing information about an individual. These laws include requirements concerning the kind of information a form can request, the information that is provided by the individual, how to store the forms and their information; and disclosing the data on the forms.

- [Federal Privacy Act, Public Law 93-579](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552\(b\)\(6\)](#)
- [Information Practices Act, California Civil Code Section 1798 et seq.](#)
- [California Public Records Act, Government Code Section 6250 et seq.](#)

DISPOSAL OF UNUSED ACCOUNTABLE FORMS

1750

(Revised 7/2014)

Each agency is responsible for the appropriate disposal of unused (blank) accountable forms. Accountable forms are unused pre-numbered forms used to record or transfer money. Examples are checks, receipts, meal tickets, and licenses.

Destruction of accountable forms should be witnessed by a member of your agency's internal audit unit. If there is no such unit, it must be witnessed by an agency employee who is not directly responsible for handling or accounting for the documents or the fees for which the documents are issued.